

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 02784 092153 Z

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ACTION ARA-17

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RSR-01 /085 W

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R 092056 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9847

INFO ASUNCION 766

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINS, BL

SUBJ: POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: LA PAZ 2667

1. SUB- MINISTER OF INTERIOR FOR JUSTICE, GASTON LEDEZMA, TOLD EMBOFF MAY 8, AND LA PAZ PRESS MAY 9 REPORTS, THAT NAMES OF 81 POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE SUBMITTED MAY 8 TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE (FISCAL) AS FIRST STEP OF ADJUDICATION THEIR CASES. MININTERIOR STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN PRESS SAID THAT THESE 81 HAD " COMMITTED CRIMES AGAINST THE STATE AND PUBLIC ORDER" AND THAT THEIR CASES WOULD BE TRIED " UNDER STRICT APPLICATION OF THE LAW".

2. COMMENT: THIS CONSTITUTES A SUBSTANTIAL FIRST STEP TOWARD FULFILLMENT OF PROMISE MADE IN MAY 2 PRESS CONFERENCE
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PAGE 02 LA PAZ 02784 092153 Z

BY RECENTLY APPOINTED MININTERIOR ALFREDO ARCE THAT ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS WOULD BE BROUGHT TO REGULAR TRIAL IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND REITERATED BY ARCE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY. THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN HELD TO DATE WITHOUT HEARINGS HAS BEEN OF CONCERN TO THE GOB, AS HAS BEEN THE FEAR THAT TO TURN ALL OF THEM LOOSE, MANY OF WHOM MIGHT WELL BE COMMITTED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE GOB, WOULD CREATE A SERIOUS THREAT TO SECURITY. ARCE TOLD THE AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 30 THAT HE PLANNED AS ONE OF HIS OBSERVERS IN ITS INITIAL GENERAL STATEMENTS.

8. DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO THE SECOND POINT RAISED BY THE NETHERLANDS REP, WORKING GROUPS. KHESTOV ASKED IF THE ALLIED REPS AGREED THAT THE EASTERN SIDE COULD RAISE THE QUESTION OF WORKING GROUPS DURING THE CURRENT CONSULTATIONS. THE NETHERLANDS AND US REPS REPLIED THAT THEY ENVISAGED THIS QUESTION BEING RAISED ONLY DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE NETHERLANDS REP EXPLAINED THE PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS UNDERLYING THIS VIEW. THE QUESTION OF WORKING GROUPS WAS A DIFFICULT MATTER TO DISCUSS EFFECTIVELY DURING THE CURRENT TALKS. THE POSSIBLE SUBSTANTIVE CONTEXT THAT MIGHT PREVAIL IN THE AUTUMN NEGOTIATIONS WAS UNCLEAR, INCLUDING THE SHAPE THE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT TAKE AND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE EASTERN SIDE MIGHT WANT TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF WORKING GROUPS. PUT MOST SIMPLY, THE ALLIES DID NOT KNOW THAT THE EASTERN SIDE HAD IN MIND IN SEEKING TO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO RAISE WORKING GROUPS, AND DID NOT SEE HOW THIS COULD BE DISCUSSED PRACTICALLY IN ADVANCE OF THE AUTUMN NEGOTIATIONS. WHILE THE ALLIED REPS COULD ENVISAGE SITUATIONS WHERE IT MIGHT INDEED BE DESIRABLE TO APPOINT WORKING GROUPS, IT WAS SIMPLY TOO EARLY TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION NOW, AND THE QUESTION AND ITS RESOLUTION WOULD BE MORE CLEAR DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE US REP ADDED THAT THE ALLIES DID NOT HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS IN PRINCIPLE TO THE IDEA OF WORKING GROUPS, AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE CLEAR FROM THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE QUADRILATERAL FRAMEWORK A MUTUAL ONE. HE ALSO UNDERSCORED THAT IN PRACTICAL TERMS THIS WAS A QUESTION WHICH SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WHEN IT COULD BE SEEN WHICH SPECIFIC ISSUES REQUIRED INTENSIVE TREATMENT.

9. KHESTOV SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE ALLIED REPS, AND THAT THE EASTERN SIDE COULD AGREE THAT ANY DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF WORKING GROUPS COULD BE DEFERRED TO NEGOTIATIONS. THE EASTERN
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PAGE 03 VIENNA 03833 02 OF 05 100048 Z

POINT WAS THAT RAISING THE SUBJECT OF WORKING GROUPS SHOULD BE PERMITTED EITHER DURING CONSULTATIONS OR NEGOTIATIONS, AND THE EAST SIMPLY WISHED TO BE ASSURED THAT THE ALLIED SIDE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE QUESTION BEING RAISED. THE EASTERN DELEGATIONS DID NOT SEEK ANY DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF WORKING GROUPS DURING THE CURRENT CONSULTATIONS. HE SAID THAT THE CONCEPT OF

A MUTUAL STATEMENT ON WOR

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